

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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O 111143Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 613

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4478

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: LATEST POLL DATA STILL CONFUSED

REF: MADRID 4326

1. EMBOFFS SPOKE AGAIN JUNE 10 WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S
CHIEF POLL TAKER. HE SAID THE RESULTS OF THE REMAINING
40 PROVINCES ON THEIR MID-TERM POLL (REF)
SHOWED LARGE NUMBERS OF UNDECIDED, IN SOME PROVINCES
REACHING NEAR OR EVEN OVER 50 PERCENT. THUS ONE COULD
ONLY EXTRAPOLATE UNDER DIFFERENT HYPOTHESES THE
FINAL RESULT, AND WITH NO SURETY WHATSOEVER OF BEING
ACCURATE. THIS SECOND STAGE DATA KEPT THE SUAREZ-LED
UCD IN THE LEAD, BUT AMONG THE DECIDED VOTERS THE PSOE
CAME CLOSE TO LEADING IN A NUMBER OF PROVINCES.

2. IF ONE TOOK THE HYPOTHESIS THAT MOST OF THE UNDECIDED
WOULD GO TO THE SUAREZ FORCES, THEN THE UCD WOULD
LEAD IN A GREAT MAJORITY OF THE PROVINCES ACCRUING A
VALUABLE PLUS IN SEATS BECAUSE OF THE WORKINGS OF THE
DEHONDT ELECTORAL SYSTEM. BUT IF ONE TOOK THE
HYPOTHESIS THAT THE UNDECIDED VOTE MIGHT BE SPLIT
UP CONSIDERABLY THEN THE PSOE MIGHT LEAD IN A
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NUMBER OF THEM AND THE CENTER'S PLURALITY MIGHT BE
SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED. ADDITIONALLY, THEIR THIRD
STAGE DATA WAS JUST BEGINNING TO COME IN AND THE
DATA FOR MADRID SUGGESTED THAT THE CENTER'S LEAD
HERE HAD SLIPPED.

3. HE WAS CONCERNED AND HAD MADE KNOWN HIS CONCERNS

TO SUAREZ'S POLITICAL LIEUTENANTS, AND IN PART THESE CONCERNS HAD RESULTED IN A STEP UP OF THE USE OF SUAREZ'S IMAGE IN THE UCD CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING A MUCH PUBLICIZED VISIT TO HIS SMALL HOME PUEBLO IN AVILA PLUS THE USE OF THE CURRENT POSTER SLOGAN "A VOTE FOR THE CENTER IS A VOTE FOR SUAREZ." MOREOVER, THE GOS HAD PALPABLY STEPPED UP IN THE LAST DAYS THE GET-OUT-THE-VOTE CAMPAIGN, NOT ONLY BECAUSE A HIGH VOTE WOULD ADD GREATER LEGITIMACY TO THE OUTCOME BUT BECAUSE THEY PRESUMED THAT A LOWER VOTE TURNOUT WOULD BENEFIT THOSE PARTIES WITH A DECIDED CLIENTELE, SUCH AS THE SOCIALISTS AND THE AP. HE STILL HOPED FOR A TURNOUT OF ABOUT 80 PERCENT NATIONWIDE, BASED ON THE DATA AVAILABLE AND THE "GET-OUT-THE-VOTE" CAMPAIGN.

4. IN HIS VIEW, THE UCD HAD GONE TO SLEEP, RESTING ON SUAREZ'S LAURELS, WHILE GONZALEZ AND THE PSOE HAD BEEN CONDUCTING A WHIRLWIND AMERICAN-STYLE CAMPAIGN WITH CONSIDERABLE EFFECT. THIS OBSERVATION IS ONLY PARTLY BORNE OUT BY EMBOFFS WHO HAVE TRAVELED WIDELY IN SPAIN. MOST PLACED (BUT NOT EVERYWHERE) THE UCD SEEMS TO BE CONDUCTING A PROFESSIONAL CAMPAIGN, BUT OBSERVERS CONCUR THAT THE PSOE--AS NUMBER TWO--IS TRYING HARDER.

5. HIS DATA CONTINUES TO SHOW THE COMMUNISTS AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AT AROUND 6 OR 7 PERCENT NATIONALLY AND THE FRAGA-LED ALIANZA POPULAR BELOW 10 PERCENT. HE NOTED THAT INTERVIEWEES WERE BECOMING CONFIDENTIAL

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SOMEWHAT IRRITATED BY THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE VARIOUS AND SUNDRY POLL TAKERS WERE APPROACHING THEM, LEADING TO MORE RELUCTANCE TO COOPERATE. HE EXPECTED THE RESULTS OF THE THIRD AND LAST POLL WOULD STILL SHOW A GOODLY NUMBER OF UNDECIDED. HE EMPHASIZED AGAIN THAT THE SENATE APPEARED TOTALLY UNPREDICATABLE.

6. OUR INTERLOCUTOR IS NOW RUNNING SCARED. BUT EVEN AS LATE AS A WEEK AGO, ON THE BASIS OF ADMITTEDLY INCOMPLETE DATA, HE DID NOT FORESEE THAT THE PSOE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY RUN AHEAD OF FRAGA'S AP NATIONALLY, WHICH WAS BY THEN A GENERAL PERCEPTION. A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, HE SEES THE PSOE AS TOO RADICAL, AND WAS UNWILLING TO RECOGNIZE, UNTIL THE DATA OVERPOWERED HIS PERCEPTIONS, THAT THE SOCIALISTS HAVE A REAL CONSTITUENCY AND THAT THE MODERATE LEFT VOTER MIGHT NOT SHARE HIS VIEWS OF THE PSOE. MOREOVER, SOCIAL SCIENTISTS LIVE BY THEIR DATA, AND THE LACK OF IT BREEDS CONCERN. HE IS WORRIED ABOUT THE SIZE OF SUAREZ'S PLURALITY,

NOT THE FACT OF IT, AND SUAREZ'S LAST MINUTE
INTERVENTION IN THE CAMPAIGN WILL CERTAINLY HAVE AN
EFFECT UPON THE UNCOMMITTED VOTER, PARTICULARLY HIS
TV APPEARANCE ON THE 13TH.STABLER

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